

**HB – 5398**

**An Act Concerning Funding To Administer Connecticut Housing Investment Fund Programs.**

A good afternoon distinguished member of the Housing Committee, my name is Mike Gurecka, with the Community Action Agency New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI), Waterbury, Ct 06702. This afternoon I am speaking on behalf of NOI, a member of the CT Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA). NOI is a Community Action Agency and currently a sub-grantee for the DOE Weatherization Assistance Program and we are an approved Home Energy Solutions Income Eligible vendor with Eversource and United Illuminating.

I am here today to support the HB 5398 and the intent to provide funding for “Aging in Place” health and safety measures, especially for our low-income population through the Dept. of Housing to the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund.

NOI commends the state’s legislature and fully supports this bill. On January 18, 2014, NOI was honored to present the findings and recommendation of the CT Weatherization Plus Health – Health Impact Assessment to the joint Housing, Public Health and Human Services legislative committees. In our presentation, we showed that when conducting weatherization energy audits in homes, especially our most vulnerable, deferrals occur in the field when we uncover health and safety issues such as Mold, Moisture, High levels of CO, Gas Leaks, Knob and Tube wiring, Asbestos, Lead and injury prevention (trips and falls).

New Opportunities, Inc. has recently completed the initial phase of our weatherization plus Injury Prevention Pilot, in which we partnered with Quinnipiac University’s Occupational Therapy Department to provide risk assessments for our over 65 eligible low income clients that had a previous history of falls in their homes. Our evaluation report is scheduled to be issued in June 2016; where we anticipate showing which injury prevention measures provide the greatest outcomes of reducing trip and fall related expenses to the states Medicaid budget; while creating a safer and more energy efficient environment for our aging low income population.

In closing, NOI again applauds the legislature for recognizing the validity of the findings and recommendation of the Health Impact Assessment and the need to provide funding to the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund for this critical aging in place funding, especially for the states most vulnerable population.

Thank You,

Michael A. Gurecka